# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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| 09/838,299 | 04/20/2001 | David Kerr | 19111.0055 | 1841 |

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| EXAMINER |
|---|
| BLACKWELL, JAMES H |

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

| | | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ **Office Action Summary** | | 09/838,299 | KERR ET AL. |
| | | Examiner | Art Unit |
| | | James H. Blackwell | 2176 |

*-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --*

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *13 November 2007*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**.  2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

4)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,4-14 and 16-18* is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,4-14 and 16-18* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *20 April 2001* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a)☒ All  b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

      1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

1)☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6)☐ Other: _____.

## DETAILED ACTION

1.      This Office Action is in response to an amendment filed 11/13/2007.

2.      The priority date is **01/10/2001**.

3.      Claims 1-2, 4-14, and 16-18 remain pending. Claim 19 has been cancelled.

4.      Claims 1, 8, 14, and 17 are independent claims.

### *Specification*

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it recites original Claim 1.

Additionally, the abstract fails to accurately describe the invention.

The present invention is a method for allowing a user to establish links between

electronic forms (see Specification – Page 1, Lines 7-13; Page 1, Lines 19-32 → these

sections describe the state of the prior art, upon which the Applicant is attempting

improvement by allowing any ordinary user, rather than only allowing a system

administrator, to establish links between electronic forms).

Once the user has established the links between the appropriate forms, a sort of

"workflow" has been created.  For example, when a new employee is hired by a

company, the employee will need to fill out the appropriate forms.  In this example, the

"new employee" workflow has previously been set up with the appropriately linked

forms, and the forms will automatically be presented to the new employee in the proper

order.  This example of the present invention is expressly set forth in the Specification at

Page 8, Lines 6-17. For purposes of examination, the examiner will interpret claim

lanuguage to correspond.

Applicant should amend the Specification to more accurately describe the

invention and to avoid using claim language.

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

- the acronym "REP" on Page 1, Line 10 should be amended to – ERP – because

  it appears to be a typographic error.

Appropriate correction is required.

### Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5.      The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
> forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
> the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
> invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
> Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

6.      Claims 1-2, 4-14, and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being

unpatentable over Jordan (U.S. Patent No. 4,982,344 filed 05/18/1988, issued

01/01/1991) in view of Trigg ("Supporting Collaboration in Notecards," copyright

12/1986, pages 153-162).

**In regard to independent Claim 1,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

**Note:** for purposes of examination, the first and second applications windows are

broadly interpreted to be different windows of the same application rather than two

windows from different, independent applications.

- *A method of defining a link between first and second applications windows on a*

  *processing system, the processing system having a database ...* (Title; Abstract;

  Col. 1, lines 1-8 → creation of links between cards (a workspace or window each

  of which occupies part of the screen space and may contain text, graphics,

  bitmap images, etc.) or other workspaces that may be linked into a network), *the-*

  *method comprising operating the end station so as to:*

  - *(a) display a first applications window* (Col. 17, lines 64-67; Figs. 6, 9 →

    an initial card (window containing a workspace within its confines)

    containing an AutoLink button (e.g., see Figs. 1A-B, Fig. 6) is displayed on

    a workstation screen);

  - *(b) cause the processing system to define a link between the first*

    *application windows and a second application window in response to the*

    *display of the second applications window, the link defining a sequence of*

    *access from the first application window to the second application window;*

    (Col. 18, line 1 through Col. 19, line 31; Figs. 1A-B, 6, 9 → a user selects

    the AutoLink button on the initial card with the left mouse button to begin

    the link and card creation process (link defining mode is now engaged).

    The user is presented with a "Link To:" menu (Fig. 9, step 350). The menu

    is superimposed on the selected AutoLink button as illustrated in Fig. 10.

A quick down and up click to select the AutoLink button will thus begin the

creation of a new card (displaying a second applications window) and a

link to is established; the link "linking" the first and second cards together.

There are also other options to link the first card to another existing card).

- o *(c) create a table for storing link data defining the link, the table being*

  *stored on the database...* (Col. 9, line 64 through Col. 12, line 18; Col. 18,

  lines 33-39; Fig. 9 → step in box 360 (Fig. 9) creates the new card's

  (second window) data unit, which includes setting up a hash (database)

  table entry for the new card as well as constructing the data unit itself (it is

  noted that the initial card also has these features). The data unit includes

  parameters and contents of the card's type, including the title and a value

  indicating whether the new card should be displayed. The data structure,

  hash also contains information on the links between cards (see Col. 10,

  beginning line 5).

It is noted that Jordan generally describes a "standalone" system in that the "end-

unit" or client is not connected to a network external to the client (Jordan's invention

is related to improvements to an existing Xerox® product called Note Cards, which

was clearly designed as standalone (see Halasz, NPL reference U on Form 892 for

review).

Thus, Jordan does not disclose *... and at least one remote end station coupled to*

*the database via a communications system.*

However, Trigg discloses (Pg. 158-159; specifically right-hand column, paragraph beginning "In order to study" → extensions to the Note Card system that would allow users to collaborate by accessing shared spaces between their computers connected via a network).

In addition, Jordan fails to disclose ... *the table being stored on the database in association with a user identifier.*

However, Tripp discloses ... *the table being stored on the database in association with a user identifier* (Pg. 156, 3rd paragraph through at least Pg. 157, left-hand column, 2nd paragraph → Tripp describes multiple users accessing Note Cards where comments/annotations, as well as links to Note Cards are identified by the individual users creating links from their defined "comment cards" to common Note Cards that the group is working on (commenting on).

Trigg further describes the use of a "History Card," which is defined for each user and summarizes the comments/annotations, as well as links made by each user and generally what each user in the collaboration did during a commenting session. The fact that each user of the collaboration has its own History Card would strongly suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that each History Card is distinguished by some sort of identification associated with the user to which the Card belonged.

Thus, Trigg discloses the storage of information, including link information for multiple users of the Note Card system.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

invention to combine the disclosures of <u>Jordan</u> and <u>Trigg</u> as both references concern

improvements to an existing system (Xerox® Note Cards). Adding the disclosure of

<u>Trigg</u> allows <u>Jordan</u> to collaborate between computers that are networked together.

**In regard to dependent Claim 2,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *step (b) comprises operating the end station so as to: (i) cause the processing*

  *system to enter a link defining mode; and then, (ii) display the second application*

  *window* (Col. 18, line 1 through Col. 19, line 31; Figs. 1A-B, 6, 9 → a quick down

  and up click to select the AutoLink button will thus begin the creation of a new

  card (displaying a second applications window) and a link to is established; the ·

  link "linking" the first and second cards together. There are also other options to

  link the first card to another existing card).

**In regard to dependent Claim 4,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *link is defined to allow the second applications window to be displayed directly*

  *from the first application window* (Col. 1, lines 19-24 → a card can be connected

  to another card by a link, represented within the contents of the originating card

  by a display object called a link icon, which may be a box with the title of the

  destination card. When a user selects a link's icon with a mouse button click, the

  destination card of that link is displayed. In addition, whether or not the card

linked to by the originating card is displayed or not is determined at the time the

link is established between the two cards (see Col. 18, lines 47-48).

**In regard to dependent Claim 5,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *the end station is adapted to present the link within the first application window*

  Col. 1, lines 19-24; Figs. 1A-B → a card can be connected to another card by a

  link, represented within the contents of the originating card by a display object

  called a link icon, which may be a box with the title of the destination card. When

  a user selects a link's icon with a mouse button click, the destination card of that

  link is displayed).

**In regard to dependent Claim 6,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *the link is defined as an icon within the first application window* (Col. 6, lines 13-

  20; Figs. 1A-B → icon is displayed in response to clicking the AutoLink button).

**In regard to dependent Claim 7,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *the user can define additional links based on the link data associated with the*

  *user identifier* (at least Col. 18, lines 20-51 → suggests that for a given card, a

  user can either create a new card and a link, or can create additional links to

  existing cards. Also, for at least the single user, the link information and other

  information associated with the cards is stored in a hash (see Col. 18, lines 52-

  60).

Jordan does not generally describe a multi-user environment where card

parameters including linking information would be stored according to a user

identification.

However, Trigg discloses (Pgs. 156-157 → multiple users accessing Note Cards

where comments on changes to Note Cards are identified by the individual users

creating links from the "comment cards" to common Note Cards that the group is

working on (commenting on).

In addition, Trigg discloses the use of a History card, which is defined by each

user and summarizes the comment links made and generally what each user did

during a commenting session. These files are identified with the user's

identification). Use of user-specific and identified comment cards making reference

to common Note Cards discloses the notion of separate user identifiers).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

invention to combine the disclosures of Jordan and Trigg as both references concern

improvements to an existing system (Xerox® Note Cards). Adding the disclosure of

Trigg allows Jordan to collaborate between computers that are networked together.


**In regard to Claim 8,** Claim 8 merely recites a processing system for performing the

method of Claim 1. Thus, Jordan discloses every limitation of Claim 8, as indicated

in the above rejection for Claim 1.

**In regard to dependent Claim 9,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *the display displaying a displayed application window* (see Figs. 1A-B, 10; Note Cards are displayed on the user's display screen).

**In regard to dependent Claim 10,** <u>Jordan</u> discloses:

- *the step of defining a link comprises causing the end station processor to:*
  - ○ *(a) determine the first and second windows* (Col. 17, lines 64-67; Figs. 6, 9 → a initial (first) card (window containing a workspace within its confines) containing an AutoLink button (e.g., see Figs. 1A-B, Fig. 6) is displayed on a workstation screen; Col. 18, line 1 through Col. 19, line 31; Figs. 1A-B, 6, 9 → a user selects the AutoLink button on the initial card with the left mouse button to begin the link and card creation process ... a quick down and up click to select the AutoLink button will thus begin the creation of a new card (displaying a second applications window) and a link to is established; the link "linking" the first and second cards together. There are also other options to link the first card to another existing card).
  - ○ *(b) generate link data including an indication of the first and second applications windows; and, (c) transfer the link data to the database* (Col. 9, line 64 through Col. 12, line 18; Col. 18, lines 33-39;Fig. 9 → step in box 360 (Fig. 9) creates the new card's (second window) data unit, which includes setting up a hash (database) table entry for the new card as well as constructing the data unit itself (it is noted that the initial card also has

these features). The data unit includes parameters and contents of the

card's type, including the title and a value indicating whether the new card

should be displayed. The data structure, hash also contains information on

the links between cards (see Col. 10, beginning line 5)).


**In regard to dependent Claim 11,** Jordan discloses:

- *the user can define additional links based on the link data associated with the*

  *user identifier* (at least Col. 18, lines 20-51 → suggests that for a given card, a

  user can either create a new card and a link, or can create additional links to

  existing cards. Also, for at least the single user, the link information and other

  information associated with the cards is stored in a hash (see Col. 18, lines 52-

  60).

Jordan does not generally describe a multi-user environment where card

parameters including linking information would be stored according to a user

identification.

However, Trigg discloses (Pgs. 156-157 → multiple users accessing Note Cards

where comments on changes to Note Cards are identified by the individual users

creating links from the "comment cards" to common Note Cards that the group is

working on (commenting on).

In addition, Trigg discloses the use of a History card, which is defined by each

user and summarizes the comment links made and generally what each user did

during a commenting session. These files are identified with the user's

identification). Use of user-specific and identified comment cards making reference to common Note Cards discloses the notion of separate user identifiers).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine the disclosures of <u>Jordan</u> and <u>Trigg</u> as both references concern improvements to an existing system (Xerox® Note Cards). Adding the disclosure of <u>Trigg</u> allows <u>Jordan</u> to collaborate between computers that are networked together

**In regard to dependent Claim 12,** <u>Jordan</u> fails to disclose:

- *step (c) comprises causing the end station processor to transfer the link data to the second processor, and wherein the second processor is adapted to store the link data in the database in association with the user identifier.*

However, <u>Trigg</u> discloses *step (c) comprises causing the end station processor to transfer the link data to the second processor, and wherein the second processor is adapted to store the link data in the database in association with the user identifier* (Pgs. 156-157 → multiple users accessing Note Cards where comments on changes to Note Cards are identified by the individual users creating links from their defined "comment cards" to common Note Cards that the group is working on (commenting on). In addition, <u>Trigg</u> also discloses the use of a History card, which is defined by each user and summarizes the comment links made and generally what each user did during a commenting session. These files are identified with the user's identification.

Specifically, Trigg discloses a Distributed Note Card system that allows users to simultaneously share access from their workstation to note files residing on any machine on the local networks.

Presumably, if Note Cards (containing link data) can be shared between networked workstations, where one user workstation is considered the "end station" while another on the network is considered as the "centre processor", then link data between cards can be transferred as well as note files containing specific user identifiers.

Trigg also discusses Access Contention and contention resolution (Pg. 158) whereby access to information is a draft passing note file may be restricted and within the Distributed Note Card system, permissions to make modifications to a Note Card is restricted to one person at a time).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention that one such way to implement such a restriction would have been by password protection, thus avoiding situations where more than one user accesses and edits a given Note Card.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to combine the disclosures of Jordan and Trigg as both references concern improvements to an existing system (Xerox® Note Cards). Adding the disclosure of Trigg allows Jordan to collaborate between computers that are networked together.

**In regard to dependent Claim 13,** <u>Jordan</u> fails to disclose:

- *in use the end station processor is adapted to receive and transfer the user*

  *identifier to the second processor, and the second processor is adapted to*

  *transfer any link data stored in the database in accordance with the received user*

  *identifier, to the end station.*

However, <u>Trigg</u> discloses *in use the end station processor is adapted to receive*

*and transfer the user identifier to the second processor, and the second processor is*

*adapted to transfer any link data stored in the database in accordance with the*

*received user identifier, to the end station* (Pgs. 156-157 → multiple users accessing

Note Cards where comments on changes to Note Cards are identified by the

individual users creating links from their defined "comment cards" to common Note

Cards that the group is working on (commenting on).

Specifically, <u>Trigg</u> discloses a Distributed Note Card system that allows users to

simultaneously share access from their workstation to note files residing on any

machine on the local networks.

Note Cards (containing link data) can be shared between networked

workstations, where one user workstation is considered the "end station" while

another on the network is considered as the "centre processor", and link data

between cards can be transferred as well as note files containing specific user

identifiers.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

invention to combine the disclosures of <u>Jordan</u> and <u>Trigg</u> as both references concern

improvements to an existing system (Xerox® Note Cards). Adding the disclosure of

Trigg allows Jordan to collaborate between computers that are networked together.


**In regard to Claim 14,** Claim 14 merely recites a client system for performing the

method of Claim 1. Thus, the combination of Jordan with Trigg discloses every

limitation of Claim 14, as indicated in the above rejection for Claim 1.


**In regard to Claim 16,** Claim 16 merely recites a processing system for

performing the method of Claim 11. Thus, the combination of Jordan with Trigg

discloses every limitation of Claim 16, as indicated in the above rejection for Claim

11.


**In regard to Claim 17,** Claim 17 merely recites a database centre for use in a

processing system for performing the method of Claim 1. Thus, the combination of

Jordan with Trigg discloses every limitation of Claim 17, as indicated in the above

rejection for Claim 1.


**In regard to dependent Claim 18,** Jordan discloses:

- *the database stores applications data associated with the first and second*

  *applications windows* (Col. 9, line 64 through Col. 12, line 18; Col. 18, lines 33-

  39;Fig. 9 → step in box 360 (Fig. 9) creates a new card (second window) data

  unit, which includes setting up a hash (database) table entry for the new card as

well as constructing the data unit itself (it is noted that the initial card also has

these features data unit, hash, etc.). The data unit includes parameters and

contents of the card's type, including the title and a value indicating whether the

new card should be displayed. The data structure, hash also contains information

on the links between cards (see Col. 10, beginning line 5). Thus, databases

associated with each of the cards stores information related to that Note Card

including its relationships via links to other Note Cards).

### *Response to Arguments*

7.      With regard to Claims 1, 8, 14, and 17, Applicants argue that the prior art of

Jordan fails to disclose the amended limitation reciting, *"caus[ing] the processing*

*system to define a link between the first application window and a second application*

*window in response to the display of the second applications window"* (emphasis

added).

The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Jordan describes (Col. 17, lines 55-62) the creation of links and cards.  Here,

Jordan's cards are interpreted as the claimed *"applications windows."* From a first card

(see Fig. 1A, item 10), a user may select the Auto Link Button (item 16).  Once selected,

a new card (see Fig. 1B, item 20) is generated and displayed and a link icon (item 28)

appears on the new card (item 28) thereby linking the first card and the new card.

Moreover, as shown in Figure 10, the user may link the first card to a newly created

card or an existing card (either of which, when selected, dislays the card and creates the link).

Thus, a *link is defined* between *a first application window* and *a second application window* **in response to the *display*** of the second applications window.

The examiner notes that the disclosure of the present application **fails** to expressly disclose a link that is "defined" "***in response to*** the **display** of the second window." If the examiner is incorrect, then Applicant should point to that part of the disclosure, by page and line number and/or figure number, which discusses this feature.

8.    With regard to Claims 1, 8, 14, and 17, Applicants also argue that <u>Jordan</u> fails to disclose, "creating a table that stores link data."

The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

Applicants are referred to the previous rejection of Claim 1 with respect to this limitation above. In creating the new card, a new card data unit is also generated, which includes setting up a hash (database) table entry for the new card as well as constructing the data unit itself (it is noted that the initial card also has these features). The data unit includes parameters and contents of the card's type, including the title and a value indicating whether the new card should be displayed. The data structure, *hash also contains information on the links between cards* (see Col. 10, beginning line 5). The Examiner interprets a table as simply one form of data structure for storage of data.

<u>Jordan</u> describes using a hash instead of a table, but these data structures are

functional equivalents.

### Conclusion

9.      THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.  Applicant is reminded of the extension of time

policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action.  In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action.  In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later

than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

10.     Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to James H. Blackwell whose telephone number is 571-

272-4089.  The examiner can normally be reached on 8-4:30 M-F.

11.     If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Doug Hutton can be reached on 571-272-4137.  The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

12.     Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system.  Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should

you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a

USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information

system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


James H. Blackwell
01/17/2008

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